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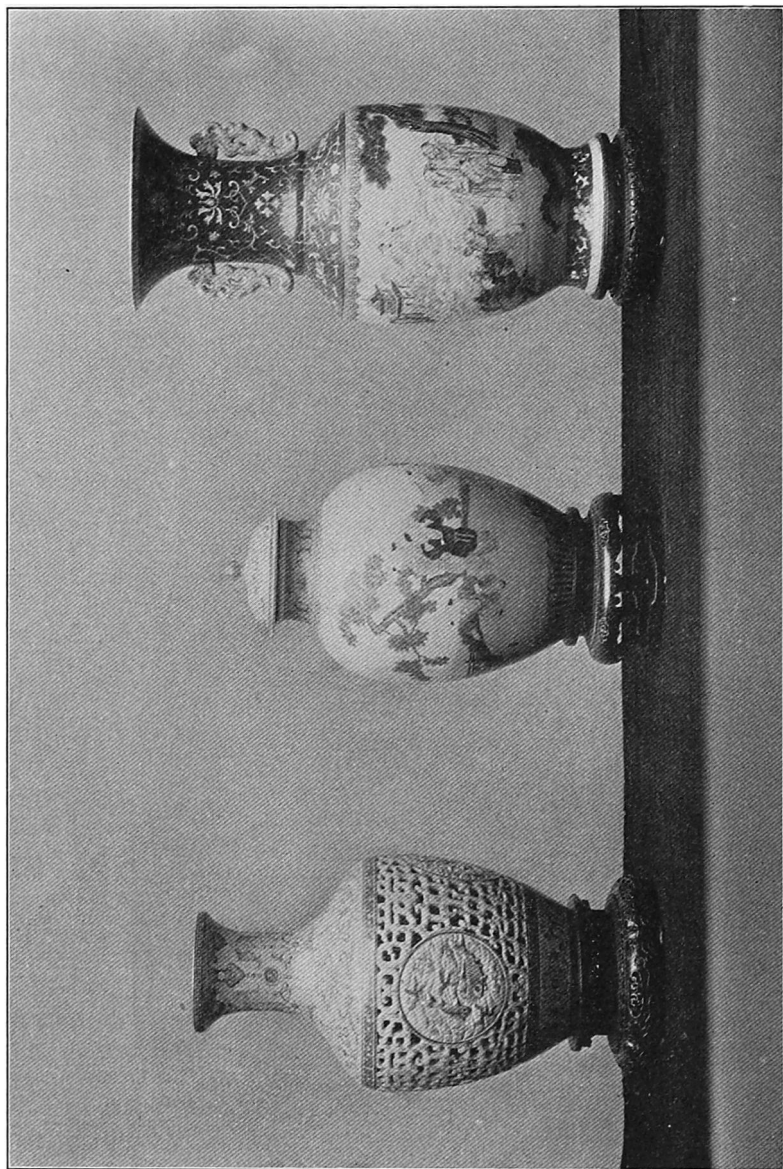
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IMPERIAL CHIEN-LUNG DECORATED PORCELAINS
Courtesy of Yamanaka & Co., New York



BULLETIN AND RECORD

ART NEWS SECTION OF BRUSH AND PENCIL

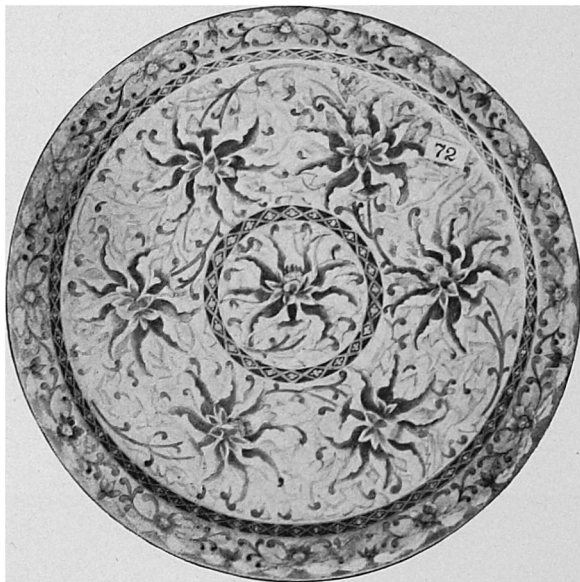
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THE ART INDUSTRIES OF AMERICA—IV CHINA-DECORATING

The art of decorating pieces of china, either for use or ornament, has at the present time achieved a position in America that would have been deemed impossible a few years ago. It is now a distinct industry. In many of the schools and some of the colleges ceramics are taught and studied—taught usually by teachers who have given much time to experiment and research, and are therefore competent to show how and why certain effects are produced. The experimental age of ceramics is past, and the subject naturally falls in BRUSH AND PENCIL'S series of articles on the Art



TRAY
Decorated by Adelaide L. Lyster

Industries of this country. In the following I shall limit myself to a general discussion, omitting the details of painting, firing, and so forth, as of interest chiefly to the actual worker.

The various exhibitions in this country and in Europe make a special feature of decorated china, and each year a department at the Paris Salon is given exclusively to this branch of art. These exhibits are received with much interest, and every new or original idea is carefully noted. The works are judged and prizes are awarded the same as in the other departments. Perhaps the growing desire for more artistically decorated china has made its influence felt through the work turned out by the factories, for in Europe, the home of modern



VASES IN HARD PORCELAIN
Decorated by Régnier and Fragonard

china manufacture, there is and has been for years a steady improvement in the artistic merit of the production. That, then, is reflected in this country, and more decorative forms and artistic shapes make it necessary that the decoration be more in keeping with the article. From this, then, comes the more artistic decoration now in vogue, for following the rules of design, and adapting the decoration to the piece of china to be decorated, will, as far as the design is concerned, give to the article a completeness that is rarely seen. The color, of course, is an important factor in the scheme, but it is secondary to



CERAMICS
Decorated by American Artists

the design. This is the one thing that is changing the whole idea of the china-painting world—design; and the watchwords of the up-to-date china-painters seem to be, "Cast off the old and put on the new, with never a backward look."

The day of the be-flow-ered china that for years threatened to inundate the country is virtually past, is at least rapidly disappearing, and is giving place to *l'art nouveau*, conventional and more formal styles of ornamentation. This always has obtained in the Orient, and some of the antiques give the impression of being painted before the beginning of time.

Orientalists have been producing ceramics the decorative beauty of which only the closest study could appreciate, and generations devoting lives to the art have been able to work out the most wonderful detailed effects. Some of these pieces have descended from one generation to another, one carrying out the idea conceived by the one gone before, and each doing his part of the work and preparing for the one to follow. It is said that in China it frequently happens that one piece of china will, in process of decoration, go from one generation to another, even to the third and fourth. This is an example of patience, and thought that should be beneficial to American china-painters, for in this country ceramics have always been on a most un-



THE HERONS
Decorated at Sèvres

substantial basis. There has been no really American ceramic with the exception of the Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati, and its worth is too well known and its influence is too widely felt to be in any way confounded with the china-painter at large. Rookwood pottery and Favrile glass stand as landmarks in the advancement of American ceramics.

This is a time when every art-student and every china-painter has the opportunity of making a name. Few of the china-painters of the day, however, are art-students. At present the work is progressing rapidly, and every one has an equal chance. Every one is striving for originality, and the development of unique ideas. The beautiful effects that will be produced and the firm footing that will be the result of this transitory stage will make a place for American ceramics that will be felt all over the world.

This will come about in a very natural manner. Those who have studied with understanding have learned or are learning to stand alone in the face of all difficulties. If it were only possible to forget the scores of pupils and the admiring public, to forget all but the work, to work on regardless of comment either for or against, to forget adverse criticism and its result, to hunger and work on for the sake of the art, to do devotedly what is to be done—then china would be decorated that would be a credit to the painter and to the manufacturer, and even to the material itself.

Much has been done. The movement has been inaugurated

and the entering wedge has begun to open the way. This entering wedge began to take effect in the ceramic field in Chicago about eight years ago, and as the way was opened the members of the ceramic associations were allowed to move forward. They were surrounded on every side by those in opposition. There was noth-



THE VESTALS

Decorated by D. M. Campana



CERAMICS
Decorated by Chicago Artists

ing, however, to do but go on. It is possible that were they not led by such a competent instructor and such an enthusiastic advocate of this higher understanding of ceramic art as Miss Keoler, many would have fallen back. But led and sustained and encouraged as they

were, it was impossible to do aught but what they did—produce admirable work. And much credit are they deserving for the start they made, which is being felt in all parts of the United States where china-painting is being done.

Mr. Dow, the teacher of design at Columbia College, has, no doubt, had more influence in bringing about the present feeling than any other one person, with perhaps the exception of Marshall Fry. Mr. Fry has for years been well known as one of the foremost china-painters in this country, and his work has always been earnest, and never what that word often implies, ugly. He has devoted himself to the new line of work and demonstrated every principle of design and applied it to the decoration of china.

This is where the art-student has the advantage, for it is all one principle,



VASE—LANDSCAPE

Decorated by Mrs. Josephine Reichmann

and those who are most proficient in the working out of naturalistic studies are the ones who are making the greatest advancement in the development of the art. And to those should the public be very grateful. They have the opportunity now to make permanent a work that is very much needed, and to enforce and bring to bear on every student the advantage of study—working out his own problems. Unfortunately china-painters have a decided lack of originality, but the work of solving their own problems, it is hoped, will correct all this, and that, too, perhaps, at no very distant date.

For years china-painters have humbly followed in the tracks of



CHINESE DECORATED PORCELAINS
Courtesy of Yamanaka & Co. New York



some one else, provided that some one was successful. The adherence has almost been slavish, and at times, if some of the workers were to be held accountable for the atrocities done in their names, there would be a "great settling-up," and the world would be less a few china-painters. Of the large number of professional china-painters to-day—there are twenty thousand in America—about fifteen are at all well known, and there are perhaps ten that at one time or another



CASE OF CERAMICS

Decorated by the Chicago Ceramic Art Association

have caused a ripple of interest. Then there are five or six at the outside that have held their own and made a reputation that is more than local—Mr. Aulich, Mr. Bischoff, Marshall Fry, Miss Mason, Mrs. Leonard, and Mrs. Robineau. In the conventional working out of designs the four last named have made a decided stand, and each has a large following of enthusiastic workers who are willing to give them the credit for knowing what is best. They are, as much as possible, doing their own work and showing an interest and a desire to accomplish something more than the mere production of a few hundred pieces of china. Surely if all are working seriously one may look forward to some good work in the future. There are many



VASES
Decorated in Florence

Americans will turn out work that is really artistic and worthy of the name it bears—decorations that are at once well designed, well colored, and well executed. As I have said, the whole trend of the art is away from the paltry make-shifts of former days, and it is no unwarranted draft on credulity to express a belief that the day the most earnest and devoted workers hope for is not far distant. Though the roll of honor is thus far so meager, there are innumerable china decorators who have talent of no ordinary character, talent that only needs direction to make it productive of the most satisfactory results. Whether the studio can compete with the factory is a question that need not concern us—there will doubtless always be ample demand for work of the requisite quality. Our native decorators can inaugurate vogues as well as their Old World competitors, and it devolves upon them to create their own market and perpetuate their own craft. While they may be hampered by the “demand for what sells,” yet they can mold public taste in things ceramic.

T. McLENNAN.

things to be said in favor of this work—first, and most important, that the artist will have to produce a certain quality, if not kind of work. With the Japanese and Chinese examples scattered about so profusely as models the standard is bound to be high, and then, when the work is better understood by those doing it, there will be china decorated in this country that will cause even the Orientals, who have a most wholesome disrespect for this branch of work in America, to change their opinions. Overcome present defects and large promise is given that will be fulfilled. Then



VASE
Decorated in Copenhagen